

MINUTES OF MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2016
6:30 P.M.

A regular meeting was held by City Council on Tuesday, January 12, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. over which Mayor Bobby L. Davis presided. Council members Michael Baker, Ralph Atkinson, Ronald Atkinson, Odessa Gregg, Joseph Frazier and Emerson Hunt were present. Also present were City Administrator Alan Ammons, City Treasurer Patricia Brown City Clerk Pam Jones and Attorney Catoe.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order and Councilwoman Gregg gave the opening prayer. Mr. Ammons led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Davis welcomed citizens, guests and the press. (Hometown TV).

Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on December 8, 2015, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; motion carried.

City Auditor, Brenda Jackson of Kenneth Cobb & Company, thanked Council for the opportunity to serve as auditor for the past year and also thanked Patricia (Brown), Alan (Ammons) and all the staff for their hard work. She presented Council with a review of the audit report and encouraged Council to stop her at any point if there were questions. The City received an unqualified opinion, a clean opinion, which is the top opinion you can receive. She gave an overview of the City of Marion's budget and highlighted important areas. She stated that assets of the City exceeded its liabilities at fiscal year ending June 30, 2015 by \$10.2 million (net assets). The City's governmental funds reported combined ending fund balances of \$6.1 million. (A copy of the audit is available at City Hall) After completing her presentation, Mayor Davis thanked Mrs. Jackson for the detailed report and commented that this was one of the best ones we have ever had. He also thanked the staff for staying within the budget, which kept us from going into the fund balance, contributed greatly to the clean opinion we received.

PFC Thomas Moore of the Marion Police Department was named *December Employee of the Month* and presented with a gift certificate. Mayor Davis thanked Officer Moore for a job well done.

The Mayor's Monthly Beautification award for December was awarded to the Mrs. Elizabeth Wallace. Mayor Davis thanked her for all she does to keep Marion clean and beautiful, as she walks her neighborhood and picks up trash so that her neighborhood maintains its beauty. Mrs. Wallace thanked the Mayor for this award and asked that others do their part to keep Marion beautiful.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson excused himself from the meeting at this time.

Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to approve the request from Rev. Henry Altman to use the Opera House for Lenten Lunch on Wednesdays from February 10 to March 16, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson; motion carried. Mayor Davis thanked Rev. Altman for allowing the City use of the Methodist Church parking lot for the starting point of the Martin Luther King Unity March on January 18th.

Mayor Bobby L. Davis requested a Resolution for Dr. Mary Eaddy, who passed on December 20, 2015, to be presented to her family at the next Council meeting. Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson made a motion to approve this Resolution, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried.

Mr. Steve Ayers was present to request a Letter of Support from Council regarding a possible housing development known as *Eastbrook Estates*, and located on Bluff Street. This will be a mixed rental development of 12 duplexes and 19 single family homes. Councilman Hunt recused himself from this discussion and vote as he is the owner of said property. Councilman Joseph Frazier made a motion to give the Letter of Support, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker. The motion carried 4-1, with Mayor Bobby L. Davis, Council members Michael Baker, Joseph Frazier and Odessa Gregg voting **yes** and Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson voting **no**. Councilman Emerson Hunt was recused and Councilman Ralph Atkinson was not present.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ammons commented that the Truck Route Policy was discussed several months ago, but we are continuously receiving numerous complaints from residents about where trucks are parking in town and also complaints from SCDOT regarding trucks doing damage to sidewalks and causing potholes.

If Council will approve a concept, we can submit it to SCDOT for their approval, and upon their approval, the Attorney will prepare an Ordinance for Council's approval. Mr. Ammons presented 2 policies (similar to what other municipalities are doing): #1 is the Truck Route which is only Highway 76 (Liberty Street) This will not interfere with any trucks making deliveries or doing business in the City. They will be prohibited from going all over town and down residential streets and also from parking anywhere. #2 will allow trucks on Liberty Street, but also allow trucks to come from North Main and turn on Jones Avenue and swing back to Supply Road heading to Highway 76 (at Burger King). Those trucks coming from South Main will come straight to Liberty Street. Trucks parking in residential areas has become a tremendous task to for the Police Department and Code Enforcement to keep up with, and when running license plates, most of these trucks are not local. Also, many of them start up at 3:00 in the morning, causing numerous complaints from residents. Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to move forward with #1 and have # 2 as a backup if SCDOT does not like #1, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier. Councilwoman Gregg inquired if this would take away the truck parking at Dollar General on South Mains, to which Mayor Davis responded that it would. Councilman Hunt that these drivers live in the City, pay taxes and are trying to support their families. There should be some option as to where they can park, even as there job may require them to crank up and leave at 3:00 in the morning. He commented that there is an economic problem here, and asked that these truck drivers be considered before they are pushed into leaving Marion as they work hard and bring money into the City. Mayor Davis responded that some do bring money into the City, but there are many who do not live in the City and that there is an authorized place for trucks to park behind the Radio Shack on East Highway 76. With no further discussion, the motion carried **5-1**, with Councilman Emerson Hunt voting **no**.

CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

Attorney Catoe had nothing to report at this time.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Mayor Davis stated that all departmental reports were sent to Council in their packets. Mayor Davis commented that there was joint meeting with the County Council prior to this meeting to discuss some concerns. Mayor Davis further commented that the City of Marion cares about our kids and we have gone far beyond the call of duty in that we entertain every aspect of a child's life that we can, as a City. We cannot address every problem that we have with our kids, we do not have all the facilities we

would like to have, but we have a budget of \$538,000 for recreation. We have two gyms, one of which is open after school for kids to play basketball, (open all day during the summer to all kids), a multi-field complex at Green Street, plus other parks. We also have a free summer camp for our kids. Mayor Davis asked that if anyone has any good, concrete ideas on things we can do for our kids, then please bring it to our attention and we will see if it is something we can do.

DISRICTS AND CITY UPDATE FROM COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Councilman Michael Baker commented that the driveways in District 6 look good and they should all be finished by the end of the week.

Council Joseph Frazier commented that all is well in District 4, other than the pothole that was just patched the other day. It is sinking again and he would like for Mr. Ammons to check on it. Mr. Ammons will report it to SCDOT.

Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson commented that there were abandoned cars on Bluff Street with no tags. Mr. Ammons will get Code Enforcement Dennis Brown to check on them.

Councilwoman Odessa Gregg asked where we stood on getting grants or help with the new fire truck. Chief Cooper updated that up to \$50,000 would come from USDA-Rural Development and the forms are being filled out. He should know what funding is available by mid-January. Councilwoman Gregg asked if other grants were available since we were such a poor county, to which Chief Cooper responded that he doesn't know why, but we did not meet the need for a grant through the Department of Commerce. The City can apply again for the Department of Commerce grant in August 2016. Mayor Davis commented that if we fail to maintain the requirements, our rating will drop, and if our ratings drop, your insurance will go up on your home. Chief Cooper stated that we are required to have three front line engines and one spare; right now we have two front line engines and one spare. We have lost one front line engine as it no longer passes pump testing, so it's not safe to use and is approximately 26 years old and passed its usable life. Mayor Davis this is a necessity for the safety of our neighbors.

Councilman Emerson Hunt commented that he and Mayor Pro-tem Atkinson had requested Recreation Director Ann Jackson be present for this meeting to answer concerns from parents and stated that he wants her on the Agenda for the February meeting. He further commented that at our last meeting it was embarrassing for 38 young men to sit in a Council meeting asking for money to go to Lexington to represent our City in the state (football) championship and at that time didn't have as much as a peanut butter and jelly sandwich provided by the City to even go up there. Councilman Hunt asked three times if there was anything the City could move around in the budget to help them and was

told no, and later found out there was \$330,000 in that budget. It should not have had to come before Council and he wanted to ask Recreation Director Jackson if she had given money to any other children at any other time, which she should have. For the record, “we are short budgeted, but when your young men are leaving out of your City, going 3 ½ hours away, and no one addresses the fact that they may need something to drink or a packed lunch, but you send an official from the City to represent the City, with these young men”. Councilman Hunt stated that we did supply some monies for them and that is greatly appreciated, but he wants to hear from her (Ms. Jackson) and she was supposed to be in front of Council today because it was a formal request, and she is not here. He further commented that he wants her before Council at the next meeting.

Mayor Bobby L. Davis stated that the Rec gave \$500 for this trip and that he personally had donated \$200. He further stated that we are not going to neglect any child. The proper procedure to ask Council for funds is to get on the Agenda, which was not done. Our Ordinance states that the Clerk must be notified in writing no later than 12:00 noon on the Thursday prior to the Council meeting on the following Tuesday. By law, the Mayor cannot amend the Agenda within 24 hours of the meeting. Mayor Davis addressed the issue of buying championship rings by stating that the City of Marion has never purchased rings for any team. One championship team held fundraisers and the parents and coaches helped in this venture, not the City. Our Clerk makes sure each of the State Championship team members and coaches receive a medallion for their accomplishment, which we are proud to present.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Joseph Frazier made a motion to enter Executive Session to receive legal advice from the City Attorney, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson; motion carried. Upon returning from Executive Session, Mayor Davis stated that no action was taken. Councilman Joseph Frazier made a motion to return to open session, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson; motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; motion carried.

Mayor Bobby L. Davis

City Clerk Pam Jones

Taped: January 12, 2016